

ALMA STREET CLINIC — PATIENT INFORMATION

366. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Mental Health:

I refer to question without notice 357 yesterday about an incident on Thursday, 25 July 2013 when a document containing confidential information relating to mental health patients was found in the street near the Alma Street clinic in Fremantle, and I ask questions again.

- (1) What information did the document contain?
- (2) Was the document printed by an employee of the clinic?
- (3) Has an investigation been carried out into the incident?
- (4) If so, who carried out the investigation and what was the outcome; and if not, why not?
- (5) Were the patients whose confidentiality was breached informed of the breach; and, if not, why not?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the member for putting the question on notice.

- (1) I have not seen the actual document but I have seen a similar document. It is a one-page A4 document. It has a printed category section across the top of it with the patient's name, ward and date of admission and another category at the side of that. It is used by teams and all members of the team, like the team doctor, the team registrar and the team nurse et cetera. It has the name of the patient on one side of it and it has the provisional diagnosis. It lists the ward and the date of admission across the page and there is a bit of space at the end for the individual team member to handwrite notes they may need to refer to during the day about action they will take in regards to that patient. That is what appears on the document that was found.

I understand that a particular staff member had this one-page document folded up in their pocket, went outside the hospital grounds and for whatever reason the document came out of the pocket. It was handed back and I really appreciate the person who handed the document back into the hospital. The potential difficulties or damage around this incident have been relatively well contained because of the foresight of the person who handed the document back at the time.
- (2) The member's second question was: was the document printed by an employee of the clinic? It is a form that is printed by the clinic and then it is filled in by hand, so the answer to the question is yes.
- (3)–(4) An internal investigation is being conducted by Mental Health executive to make sure that something like this does not happen again and to ensure that the necessity of a document of that nature not going outside the hospital is reinforced to staff.
- (5) The member asked: were the patients whose confidentiality was breached informed of the breach; and, if not, why not? The timing of this incident is unfortunate in that the IT system at the hospital was recently updated and staff are in the process of retrieving those individual patients' names and contact details. They will be contacted as soon as possible, as soon as the information is provided.